

old, bleak, brown, barren mountains, hills and valleys, while on the other are splendid groves of orange, lemon and other fruits, large and fruitful vineyards, and beautiful fields of green alfalfa, with here and there pretty cottages or country villas surrounded by yards, gardens, lawns, and flowers, flowers everywhere of beautiful variety and rich profusion; then let him remember—as he will—that the difference between this and that is simply the presence or absence of water. Where the waters come there is fertility, fruitage, beauty, riches and life; where no water is, there is only bareness, barrenness, poverty, ugliness and seeming death. Life is in the waters. To such an one ever after there will be new meaning in the words, "As rivers of water in a dry place"; a strange beauty and power in the prophet's illustration, "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose"; and wondrous significance in the Savior's promise, "He that believeth on me, . . . from within him shall flow rivers of living waters." For the Gospel is this water of the river of life: "And everything shall live whither the river cometh"

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THE REAL PURPOSE OF LIFE.

This be our thought of life, then. It is not for what we are that we are living, but that something of what God is may become evident and effective in the world. There is a purpose of life which we can never outgrow. We shall go up to heaven some day, and as we stand before His throne, still there will be witness of God for each of us to bear—some witness, I believe, which no other soul in all the universe could bear but us. The heavens will be telling the glory of God forever; and though our star may be indistinguishable, somewhere in all the flood of radiance shall be the light it sheds—a witness special and different in color from all the others which are reflecting that Light which is to lighten every saint.

Until that comes, the same truth is here on earth. To every poor sufferer, to every discouraged worker, to every man who cannot think for himself and yet is too brave to despair, this is the courage that the Gospel gives. Not what you can do, but what He can do in you; not what you are, but what you can help men to see that He is—that He is the power by which you are to work. I beg you to think, in the light of this truth we have been studying today, of the deepest meaning of these words of St. Paul: "Ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—Phillips Brooks.

The chief duty of a Christian lies in the quiet, unseen life of his own home, and if he does not learn there to practice that noble virtue of unselfishness—that highest type of charity which consists in daily and hourly considerateness for the feelings of others, he will have lost one of the strongest resources and one of the most healing memories for all his future life.—F. W. Farrar.

The Quiet Hour

Clear, O Lord, our inward vision, that we may see through the false shows of life, and be kept quiet and true by thy great realities. Waken us all from the dreams of the earthly mind in its forgetfulness of thee. Reveal to the young, O thou Supreme Inspirer, what it is to live this great life of opportunity; and fill them with the pure and undefiled religion which will keep them unspotted from the world. And in the hearts of elders let not the fires die or their work linger, till they are overtaken by the fading light and lengthening shadows of their set time. Knowing nothing of the morrow, may we rejoice to be faithful today, gladly accepting the humblest task that waits for us by thy will and shines with the holy light of thine approval. Amen.

ON THE HEIGHTS.

If Christian people want to have the bread of God abundantly, they must climb. It is to those who live on the heights that provision comes according to their need. If you would have your Christian life starved, go down into the fertile valleys. Remember Abraham and Lot, and the choice which each made. The one said: "I want cattle and wealth, and I am going down to Sodom. Never mind about the vices of the inhabitants. There is money to be made there." Abraham said, "I am going to stay up here on the heights, the breezy, barren heights," and God stayed beside him. If we go down, we starve our souls. If we desire them to be fat and flourishing, nourished with the hidden manna, then we must go up. "Their pasture shall be in all high places."—Alexander Maclaren.

UNION WITH GOD'S WILL.

Man's will alone can do great things. God's will can do greater. When the two are joined together, limitations are swept away. Every man knows by experience something of the possibilities of his own unaided will-power. There have been times when, in estrangement from God, and without prayer, we have depended upon our own will alone in the accomplishment of a certain matter, and by sheer determination have succeeded. It may have been only a small accomplishment, but it was enough to prove the existence and the working value of a will. What God asks of us is that we use that same will, and in that same spirit of determination, in working with him and with his will. If we would try as hard with him as we sometimes try without him, life would begin to show results.

Only by degrees, and with much practice, does prayer grow spontaneous and habitual. But when once it has become habitual it profoundly affects our entire character; for it accustoms us to associate God with all the greatest joys of our life, and thereby not only makes our fundamental thought of God a thought of gladness, but intensifies our whole apprehension of his being and relation to ourselves.—G. R. Illingworth.